DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 348 EC 307 198

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TITLE From Deaf Homes to Hearing Homes: Building Bridges via Schools.
PUB DATE 1999-04-20
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 20, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Rearing; *Cultural Differences; Curriculum; *Deafness; Elementary Secondary Education; Mentors; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; Parent School Relationship; *Parenting Skills; Program Design; Staff Development; Student Needs; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS Illinois (Chicago)

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Chicagoland Deaf Parent to Hearing Parent Project, an initiative intended to bridge the cultural gaps between the deaf community and the hearing parents and school personnel who are nurturing and educating children who are deaf. Through a series of workshops that take place in schools and community centers, parents who are deaf act as resources and mentors to hearing parents who are raising children with deafness, and to their schools. The project's goals are to: (1) tap into the natural parenting capacities of hearing parents raising children with deafness; (2) help hearing parents of children who are deaf to develop comfort with and the capacity to respond to the socio-linguistic needs of their children with deafness; (3) strengthen parents' self-confidence and accompanying abilities to advocate for their child within the school system; and (4) enable school personnel to better understand the strengths, needs, and experiences of both parents with deafness and hearing parents of children with deafness. The paper discusses the difficulties parents face in raising children with deafness, curriculum development, and parent satisfaction with the program. (Contains 19 references.) (CR)

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ED 430 348

From Deaf Homes to Hearing Homes:
Building Bridges via Schools

Paper Presentation
at the
Annual Meeting
of the
American Educational Research Association
Montreal, Canada - April 20, 1999

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The Chicagoland Deaf Parent to Parent Project is funded by the The United Way Crusade of Mercy of Chicago, and is a joint project of the Jewish Family and Community Service, and Mount Sinai Hospital, supported by the Jewish United Fund.

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From Deaf Homes to Hearing Homes:
Building Bridges via Schools

Introduction

Educating Deaf Children[1]

In recent years schools across the country have begun to discuss the importance of "culturally-relevant pedagogy." As part of this discussion, school personnel acknowledge the difficulties when children and educators are from cultural, language, and experiential backgrounds different than their own. If we believe that knowledge of children's cultural groups--language, norms, values, and ways of doing things-- is helpful in educating the child, then we know we must find a way to learn about their cultures.

One way of bridging the gaps which often exist between the knowledge and experience of teachers and the learning strengths and needs of their students is to develop partnerships with adults who know them best; adults who can act as cultural translators and links to the knowledge of their communities (Cummins, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Moll, 1992; Hulsebosch, 1996). For most children, partnerships between teachers and parents[2] best serve this function. Parents, with their intimate knowledge of their children, typically offer "funds of knowledge" (Moll, 1992) derived from homes and communities which schools can tap for teaching and learning. Parents also act as mediators between the home and community environments, and the world of schools (Concha Delgado-Gaitan & Ruiz, 1992). Two things interfere with the development of home-school partnerships for deaf children: a) schools' views of parents, and b) parental responses to deafness.

This paper describes the Chicagoland Deaf Parent to Hearing Parent Project, an initiative intended to bridge the cultural gaps between the deaf community and the

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[1] Typically when the literature refers to deaf children they either explicitly or implicitly are discussing the 90% who are being raised by hearing parents who, prior to the birth of their child, have had little or no contact with deaf individuals.

[2] We use term "parents" to signify adult caregivers in a child's life, be they grandparents, foster parents, or other extended family members.

hearing parents and school personnel who are nurturing and educating deaf children. Through a series of workshops that take place in schools and community centers, Deaf parents act as resources and mentors to hearing parents who are raising deaf children, as well as to their schools. The Project's goals are:

1) to tap into the natural parenting capacities of hearing parents raising deaf children;
2) to help hearing parents of deaf children develop comfort with and the capacity to respond to the socio-linguistic needs of their deaf children;
3) to strengthen parents' self-confidence and accompanying abilities to advocate for their child within the school system; and
4) to enable school personnel to better understand the strengths, needs, and experiences of both deaf and hearing parents of deaf children.

In this paper we will first describe the perspectives undergirding the Parent to Parent Project. We will then describe core elements of the Project. Finally, we will describe what we have learned thus far about bridging school, home and community cultures.

Perspectives

Defining Home-School Relationships

Educators say that *parents are their child's first teacher* and that in order for education to be effective, families must be involved (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Yet, the approach to family-school relations, especially for children who are members of minority groups, is usually uni-directional rather than reciprocal, with the flow of influence from school to home, and the intent to improve families or enlist their support for school identified goals (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990).

The focus on the value of schools' knowledge for families and their children is often rooted in a belief that parent, communities, and children are deficient in the qualities, traits, and skills needed to educate (Delpit, 1995, Vazquez, et. al., 1994). Schools, then, attempt to "overcome" what they see as the deficits of students by developing programs to compensate for what they believed to be lacking. These programs are often based in a

skills approach which aims to "break down" learning, while overlooking the culture, capacities, experiences, and that students and their families offer schools (see, for example, Haberman's 1991 discussion of the "pedagogy of poverty"). The Deaf community is a community that has been profoundly affected by the deficit model.

Deaf of Hearing

Raising a deaf child can be confusing and sometimes rather scary. On the one hand, deaf children are, in many ways just like other children. They look just like other children. They ride bikes like the wind, run wildly into the street, climb to a treetop, go food shopping, swim in the lake, and eat lunch at McDonalds. They do almost everything a hearing child does. They just don't understand the restrictions parents need to put on some of these activities. They want to know why can't you run in the street, why can't you climb a tree too high, why can't you swim out too far, why can't you have ice-cream at McDonalds, and why shouldn't you stand in the back of the cart at the food store. Often to a deaf child every thing is just "No! Don't do that! Stop!"

They can also participate in most of the activities with their hearing siblings: put their coat on to play in the snow; get in the car to go to the zoo; leave daycare on a fieldtrip; travel to Grandma's for the holidays. They can do it all; they just don't know why they're doing it. They wonder, "Is this something fun I'll like to do or are we going to the doctor for a shot?" People disappear (as when Mom is in the adjacent room using the vacuum cleaner) and reappear for no apparent reason. Family members look sad (e.g., if there is a funeral), or happy (e.g., when an older brother shares a success at school), and, although the deaf child can clearly see this on their faces, the causes are unclear. And most hearing parents (at least in the beginning) don't have a way to communicate those everyday things. Mom may try to show her Deaf daughter where she's going, but her daughter's "eyes are busy" as Mom is pointing. Over time many deaf children begin to resist being moved around without any sense of control over their environment and the power struggles, frustrations, and disappointments begin.

Parents' first experience of deafness usually comes when their child is "diagnosed" as deaf within the medical system. Parents of deaf children, then spend untold hours consulting with specialists about the "prognosis" and "treatment" options in what Gusfield (1989, p. 423) refers to as "troubled-persons industries" (cited in Lane, 1997). Immediately there are tremendous pressures on parents to make decisions: Whether or not to have surgically implanted cochlear implants or buy hearing aids? Which communication system to use? If they should place their child immediately in an "early intervention program"? In preschool programs for deaf children the focus is likely to be on developmental delays, remediation, and language acquisition.

All of this, the focus on disability, the emphasis on the medical model of response, the unfamiliarity with deafness, often results in parents becoming uncertain about their abilities to parent their deaf child. Hearing parents of deaf children may also share the dominant culture's norms and myths about deafness that influence their perceptions and expectations of their children. Although hearing parents work very hard to connect with their deaf children, they may find it ungratifying. They report that the things that worked with their hearing children just don't work with their deaf child. Thus, knowledge, processes, interactions, routines, and tasks about which parents would seldom think twice become frustrating, and parental capacities become "frozen" for hearing parents of deaf children.

Deaf Perspectives

The definition of deafness as a category of disability is in contrast to the construction of Deaf as members of a linguistic minority with a concomitant culture.[3]

In the last decade, in the wake of the civil rights movements of the 1960's and the realization that the signed languages used by Deaf are linguistically valid, activists in the Deaf community have begun to describe the perspectives, knowledge and strengths of

[3]There is a growing practice of capitalizing Deaf when referring to this second construction. That practice will be followed from here on in this paper.

Deaf as a culture. Marschark (1997) makes the point that, "Deaf culture and current technologies make being Deaf different from having another disability, and the Deaf community has a tradition of being a social and artistic subgroup within the larger society." (p. 44)

Deaf parents raising deaf children bring to child-rearing years of implicit as well as explicit experience, knowledge, and attitudes about what it means to be Deaf. Deaf parents intuitively think in visual ways, which is the best way to convey information to young deaf children who are just forming a language base. Although Deaf parents are raised in a society which sees them as disabled and can seldom avoid the attitudes of deficiency, they are also know what they, and their peers, have been capable of and are more aware of their Deaf children's potential. Bat Chava's (1973) meta-analytic literature review showed that Deaf teenagers and adults who associate more closely with other Deaf people have more positive self-esteem. Her findings strongly suggest that having a community of people who share one's minority group membership, both in childhood and in adulthood, protects Deaf individuals from the majority's negative attitudes.

Other evidence demonstrates that parental acceptance is associated with higher self-esteem in children of both genders, and in a variety of social classes, ethnicity's, and religions (ibid.). "Deaf children of deaf parents tend to be more self-assured, better educated, more literate, and better equipped to deal with life in a hearing world, without requiring extensive intervention from professionals. As a result, Deaf of Deaf tend to function better than Deaf children who are raised in hearing families. Most go on to higher education, become employed and successful at their vocations" (Carver, 1993; Padden, 1990; Sisco and Anderson, 1980). For Deaf parents, their Deaf children are "normal" and they look forward to sharing their life experiences via their common language.

Deaf parents who have raised successful Deaf children can provide valuable insights into the strengths and needs of Deaf children. Yet, they have seldom been sought out for their expertise. One reason is that parents, particularly parents of disenfranchised groups

(such as low-income, language diverse, or African-American) who are seen as troubled and troubling are seldom sought out as resources on their children (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delpit, 1995). In addition, hearing parents and teachers of Deaf may not have the skill in native Deaf language (American Sign Language or ASL) to communicate with Deaf adults.

The Deaf Parent to Hearing Parent Project

The Deaf Parent to Hearing Parent Project began from a desire to tap into the resources of the local Deaf community in the interest of supporting the knowledge, skills and networks of hearing parents raising deaf children. The goal was to provide structures within which Deaf parents who had raised Deaf children could share their indigenous knowledge about Deaf children with hearing parents through a series of workshops and subsequent mentoring relationships. Since most of the workshops took place in schools, we also began to see unexpected influences on school personnel as the project progressed. This paper reports on what we've learned from the first two years of the Parent to Parent Project (PPP).

Curriculum Development

Project staff[4] initially reviewed the literature on raising Deaf children to gain a better understanding of relevant issues. Then six Deaf parents of deaf children met in focus groups to brainstorm knowledge, strategies, and skills they knew from their own parenting experiences to be important in raising deaf children. When their discussions mirrored current research on best practice for deaf children, that research was provided to them to help validate the significance of their experiential and intuitive responses. The goal was to help Deaf parents articulate the things that they know intuitively about how

[4] Current Project staff consist of Lynda Myers, a Deaf social worker from Jewish Family and Community Services, and Suzanne Burley, Ph. D.; Mount Sinai (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Mental Health Program). Lynda is also a mother of a Deaf daughter.

deaf children think and learn. The ultimate goal of the series of focus groups was to identify techniques and concepts to be used in hands-on workshops to educate hearing parents on Deaf children's learning strengths and needs. These initial Deaf participants also formed the core of the project's staff for workshops. Staff development sessions in preparation for our first workshops focused on thinking visually, non-verbal communication, literacy, and the emotional issues of hearing parents. The final session established the curriculum for the series of four parent workshops. Through this curriculum we created activities which provided hands-on opportunities to learn techniques for use at home (e.g., thinking visually, non-verbal communication, storybook reading, and boundary setting).

Over the last three years we have trained nine Deaf parents to be paraprofessionals, seven of whom are currently active in the project. Since the goal is to tap into the capacity of all parents for raising children, we also recruited five hearing parents who are raising deaf children as role models and support staff in our workshops.

Description of Workshops

"It (the workshop) reminded me know much I forgot to just play with my son. I'm always saying "no" to him."

Over the course of two years we have offered fourteen series of workshops. About half of these workshops take place during the school day (usually first thing in the day so as to better enable parents to attend a workshop prior to going to work). The other half of the workshops take place at night or on the weekend at sites connected with community organizations, including advocacy groups and churches for Deaf. Most recruiting for groups is done through the schools.

The families who attend these workshops have Deaf or hard of hearing children from birth to age six. The families are 44% Latino, 32% Afro-American, 20% Caucasian, and 4% unspecified. 24% of the parents are single mothers. 25% have only the Deaf child in the home, 42% have two children and 33% have three or more children in the home. The majority of the families live in the inner city.

Prior to beginning a series of workshops in schools we spend time talking with teachers, individually and at faculty meetings so that they will be supportive in recruiting parents for the workshops. Inner city school staff are often pessimistic about their students' families' ability to learn the skills needed to "teach" or even support the development of deaf children. They seem to attribute parental "non cooperation" to a lack of interest or caring rather than to a lack of knowledge and insecurity. Our project assumes that parents have skills and can learn to adapt them to better meet the needs of their children. Our enthusiasm serves as a catalyst for change. The first year we went to a school seeking to host the project there, saying how we hoped to have mothers and fathers participate, the teacher laughed,, saying "We never see fathers here." We had a full workshop with six families and two fathers in attendance. The next year the teacher volunteered to help make phone calls to all the families and the school showed a greater commitment to the work providing us with a constant meeting place every week. At other schools we've been surprised to find school faculty asking to attend the workshops with the parents. Thus, we have learned over the three years of the Project, that this foundational work with school staff also has the possibility of shifting the understanding of school personnel regarding the potential of parents, and parenting Deaf children.

Project workshops use a curriculum generated by Deaf parents, and are lead by Deaf professionals and Deaf parent volunteers. Through the workshops we try to create an environment where parents can reconnect with the pleasures of parenthood. Children are present and take part in all activities, working alongside with parents. We encourage parent/child interaction during the workshops. Observation of this interaction and sharing our insights with parents, is the primary agenda for our workshops. Siblings, extended family members, and, increasingly school staff also attend groups if they desire.

The workshop curriculum focuses on depathologizing the Deaf experience and helping parents to better understand the "realities" of their child's life. We share cultural/communication differences. For example, Deaf people naturally follow the eye line when trying to figure out what a child wants. Hearing people tend to rely on the

gestures that children make. Thus when a child who has no language is crying for something to eat he points to the shelf and throws a tantrum. His or her hand is pointing and moving around while he becomes more upset. A deaf person tends to draw an invisible line from the child's eye to where he is looking. Then asks, while pointing, "Is this what you want?" This approach works well since children tend to get fixed on what they want and their eye is likely to remain on the item while the body is moving all over the place. The end result is that deaf parents find the item sooner then hearing parents with less frustration for both parties. We share communication hints like "watch the eyes" with the hearing parents to help them understand how to more easily attend to the communication needs of their child.

We also provide practical activities to further parent/child interaction and help parents learn how to structure their deaf children's environments to meet their specific needs. In most workshops we play the Copy Game. This activity is like playing the drama game Mirror in which one person "mirrors" what the first person does. We ask parents to get down on the floor and copy whatever activity their child is doing. If the child is moving a car along the floor we ask parents to mimic the activity, keeping their faces close to their child's, mirroring whatever facial expressions their child is making. There are many purposes for this activity. First, it is non-verbal and nonjudgmental, thus not frustrating for parent and child. Second, it helps parents learn how their child uses their eyes. There is a natural rhythm that deaf people use to shift eye gaze from activity to communication, sequentially. Since hearing people can talk and be involved in an activity at the same time (simultaneously), most hearing parents are not in tune with that rhythm. Deaf parents help the hearing parents expand their use of facial expression during the activity to show them how the child will be more likely to maintain eye gaze if the parent is showing them interesting expressions. That improves the length of eye gazing behavior, which improves the opportunity to give the child information. Use of the copy game in the home allows the child to have control over an activity, which usually evolves into a game of follow the leader, which is very empowering for a deaf child. Over time the parents report they see

a change in their child's self esteem and in their own understanding of timing in attempts to feed their child information.

We discuss techniques that can be used in the home and, after observing parental interaction, demonstrate adaptations that help parents become be more connected to and beneficial to their children, i.e. how to coordinate hands, eye movement, while reading a book to a Deaf child. These techniques allow parents to utilize their own parenting skills as they begin to understand how to adapt to meet the conceptual needs of their children.

Data Sources

Over the course of the first two years of the Parent-to-Parent Project, data has been collected to better understand the influences and interactions that have occurred. Data sources include: 1) pre-and post-test questionnaires and project satisfaction surveys;[5] 2) follow-up interviews; 3) field notes of Project staff; and 4) videotapes of workshop sessions.

Questionnaires and Surveys

Project pre- and post- questionnaires included ten questions addressing issues of communication, knowledge of deafness, comfort with Deaf people, and feelings of parental efficacy. In addition, parents completed a satisfaction survey at the end of the workshops. Follow-up interviews, via telephone and in person, were also conducted at one-month, six-month, and twelve month intervals. Twenty-three parents provided data on all of these sources.

Data shows that parents felt quite satisfied with the Deaf Parent-to-Parent groups. They felt they had acquired better communication skills, and felt somewhat less anxious regarding communication and parenting their Deaf child. The most significant finding from the questionnaires show that after completing the workshops, hearing parents became less anxious about meeting Deaf adults. This is positive and may enhance the parent's interaction with their own Deaf child and the Deaf community, which if Bat-

[5] Survey and questionnaire results were compiled by Suzanne Burley, Ph.D. of Mount Sinai Hospital, one of the two facilitators for this Project.

Chava's findings are correct, will lead to increased self-esteem in their children. The groups also appeared to have an impact upon the parents' level of parenting competence. After completing the groups and across follow-ups, the parents appeared to feel more competent in parenting and managing their Deaf child's behaviors.

Satisfaction survey results indicate that, on the average, the parents were quite satisfied with the Deaf Parent-to-Parent Group. They felt that had learned new ways to communicate with their child, learned techniques to help then better manage their child's behavior and felt less anxious in regards to "doing the right things" with their Deaf child. In addition, they felt the group contributed to a better understanding of their Deaf child's needs and what is possible for their child's future.

Parental responses to follow-up interviews suggest that the Deaf Parent-to-Parent workshops had a positive impact on parent's communication and competence. An overwhelming number of parents indicated that they are utilizing the communication techniques taught. In addition, they felt that the information acquired in the workshops facilitated more positive interactions with their children. A little over one-half of the parents interviewed indicated that they have taken advantage of information regarding networking opportunities. On the average, parents continue to "sometimes" question their adequacy in regards to parenting a Deaf child and "sometimes" feel that family members are not as supportive or understanding of Deafness. In more recent groups, several parents have asked how they can encourage extended family members to become more involved. Parents continue to acknowledge that a Deaf child places greater demands upon their time that also includes mothers being more responsible for interpreting among family members.

Fieldnotes

I Can Do Something: During one of our first workshops we had a perfect situation where a real life, typical, experience was played out in the workshop and used as a spring board to one of our curriculum ideas.

Maritsa went to get her child from the classroom to attend the workshop. When she returned to the meeting room, her daughter Olivia refused to enter the room with her. She kept trying to get Maritsa to stay out into the hallway. Maritsa finally came into the room alone, looking sheepish and stating that she didn't know what to do, that Olivia often did this, and was just so stubborn unlike her four other siblings. The Deaf parent volunteer tried to lure Olivia in by drawing a picture of Olivia crying with the Deaf staff next to her comforting her and then playing together. Olivia looked at it but remained in the hallway.

The worker then asked if Olivia knew she would see her mom at school today (no). Discussion continued asking what usually happened when she comes to school. (They go home early). We asked Olivia in sign if she was surprised to see Mom and sad because they were not going home now. We discussed with Maritsa and the other arriving mothers how one technique we were sharing today was the calendar/photo display. Eventually after Maritsa, refused to go out, and the Deaf volunteer continued to engage her, Olivia entered the room hugging Maritsa's legs and then playing near her feet. We began group by showing the workshop calendar and had Olivia and the other children put stickers on the group dates - later we took photos of the family with the staff and put the Polaroid on the calendar. We explained how children like to know what to expect and how most behavior problems stem from the child's confusion or frustration with a change in activity or location. We explained how Deaf children miss what hearing children learn unconsciously. How their hearing children have a lot of warning about family plans. They hear mom and dad talking about the upcoming weekend, overhear phone calls, or mom telling the other kids to get ready to go. We asked how the mothers explain changes to their hearing children. Then asked about their Deaf ones. They admitted that they don't have the vocabulary to really explain things to their Deaf children as they do with

the hearing siblings and so they often forget to inform them at all. In one session a mother said "Oh my g-d, last week, I put her in the car and we drove for 8 hours. All the other kids were excited because they knew we were going to Grandma's house. I didn't even think to tell her. What could she have been thinking." We then demonstrate how to use calendars, photos, and other timelines to help children understand time and events.

The next week Maritsa was in the group room before group began. We asked if she had used the calendar. She explained she had put it on the refrigerator and both last night and today, told Olivia, that she would drive to school and would be in group to play with her while pointing to the calendar. We all waited to see how Olivia would enter the room today. Olivia came right in holding Maritsa's hand and sat right down to play with puzzles. The group then applauded them. Later Maritsa herself explained to the newly arriving members how she had used the calendar, to help Olivia understand today's plans. Saying "*I used to be confused but now I feel like I can do something.* This lead to a discussion of how prediction helps children manage the anxiety of transitioning from environments and activities.

This story shows how parents can reframe their child's behavior when given new ways of understanding how deafness interacts with normal child development. It also shows how parental self-esteem is improved when such interventions are made. Maritsa became "unfrozen" and much more active in her child's daily life, which included volunteering in her child's school.

I Didn't Know It Could Happen That Fast[6]: Hearing parents of Deaf children tend to be physically controlling with their children. In the videos we often see mothers grabbing their children's chins to force them to look at them or a book. This happens because Deaf children are very active, but can not be guided verbally. Thus, parents tend to pick them up and redirect them, grab them when they are running wildly, etc. Those interventions are good when the child's a toddler, but as children get older and they need more

[6] Kjersti Usler L.P.C. staff from J.F.C.S. complied these fieldnotes.

independence, parent-child communication becomes more important. Unfortunately there is often no significant shared language in the home. When a parent is not able to shift to a more interactive (back and forth) communication style as their child ages, a parent child power struggle may occur. One parent in our project seemed to be getting into power struggles with her daughter. From the stories she was telling, it might have looked like her daughter was being seriously oppositional. But in looking at it from a systems perspective, we identified structural changes that could decrease their frustration at home and create some stability for the child.

A Latina mother of a 6 year old girl came to her first advanced workshop looking very sad and depressed, making little eye contact. She sat in silence while the discussion revolved around issues of parenting and behavior management. While parents took turns talking, her lack of participation was noticeable, so she was invited to share her thoughts and feelings about the topic with the group.

She described in detail, via our Spanish translator, with great sadness her feelings of inferiority; she thought her lack of signing skills and problems in communicating with her Deaf daughter resulted in her daughter's misbehavior. Her daughter was now 6 and she could not sign as well as her daughter. She didn't feel like she could go to the teachers for help since they say her child is wonderful in the classroom. In her interaction with the group, she became aware of her misconception; that all her problems stemmed from her child's deafness and her lack of sign skills and would continue until she signed better. She then spoke of having a stubborn child. Relating daily power struggles over homework, she said she struggles hard to explain the work to her daughter; but is unable to make her child finish the task. She was often embarrassed to send homework back to school undone or incorrect. She blamed herself for her child's stubborn and controlling behavior.

The group discussed how to better structure daily routines to fit the needs of a Deaf child. Project staff offered insights and suggestions. First we talked about how Deaf children are often particularly tired after school due to increased demands from

communication (e.g., eyestrain, total attention to task without relief time). If so, let the have a rest/play time after getting off the bus. Next we talked about the need to set up familiar routines to establish expectations in order to minimize the amount of "communication" required. We suggested setting up a "special" homework location with little visual stimulation, with all supplies needed. In order to help a child understand homework is to be done there and no playing until it is completed. Father/mother can sit in the same area as the child while the child works on her homework. Mother can do paper work or read to be available for the child's checking in behaviors, while doing homework - i.e., to praise the child and help her/his child deal with frustration. Third, we asked the parents to discuss how they usually structure their after school hours. The group complimented their suggestions and added, " Give children some parent play/attention time after school before requiring homework. Children will cooperate better if they are feeling satisfied in their desire for parental comfort and attention."

In discussing the homework situation with the group and getting new information and perspective, the mother seemed somewhat relieved. The next week when the group met, she entered the room smiling, and her body posture seemed more assertive. She had a new look; new haircut and make up, and overall she presented as a woman more happy and confident. With no hesitation, using the translator, she shared how relieved she felt last week when leaving the workshop. She expressed her feeling of being understood and heard. She explained how she regained some self-confidence. How she was able to implement successfully the activities suggested by the group. She said: "My relationship with my daughter has changed. I didn't know it could happen that fast and that she would respond so well. I try to spend more quality time with her; I try to include her in the activities I'm doing. Sometimes it seems to be enough to just be there close to her, in the same room, where she's doing her things and I'm doing mine. It is really great.

Video-Tapes of Sessions

One of the goals of the Project is to enable parents to tap into parenting capacities, which have become "frozen" in interactions with their Deaf child. In addition, we hope

they will add new capacities to their repertoire that will enable them to respond to their Deaf child's socio-linguistic needs. Thus, our analysis of videotapes of the workshops focuses on interactions between parents and children during the workshops over the course of the four workshops. We also focus on interactions which take place outside of the workshops, as described by parents during the workshops. With over one hundred hours of videotapes, our analysis is still in the preliminary stages.

One pattern we notice is that parents and their children sit closer together in workshops after they have played the Copy Game. We speculate that this is because the game promotes non–judgemental, non-language dependent, low frustration interactions between parents and child.

Another pattern we have identified thus far has to do with differences in interactions between the primary care-giver (usually the mother) and secondary care-givers in the home (usually fathers, but sometimes grandmothers, aunts, etc.). Mothers have a pattern of being more directive and physically controlling in their interactions with the Deaf child than other care-givers. In addition, it appears that fathers shift more rapidly than mothers from non-interaction or verbal only interaction to non-verbal and visual ways of interacting and communicating with their children. We wonder how much of this might be related to the larger role mothers often play in interceding between medical and school specialists and their child, making it more difficult to switch back to the parental role.

Finally, over the two years of video-tapes we see an increasing number of care-givers and service-providers brought by parents to workshops. We also see more and more school personnel participating in groups, including classroom teachers, building principals, and central office administrators.

From the videos we learn that parents can shift from verbal communication to non verbal and visual communication, as we see fathers do so easily. Perhaps they have a less

established pattern of interactions with their children and so do not have to unlearn behaviors as it appears to be the case with the mothers. In any case what fathers learn mothers will also be able to learn. The project parents are able to make conceptual shifts and use the "thinking visually" techniques we have provided them in our workshops. When they do so, it appears they become motivated to see how they can make other adaptations to benefit their child. As parents report in the workshops, some of the interventions are immediately reinforced by the positive responses from their children. Their child's behavior shifts in response to the parents interventions, which serves to improve parental self esteem. Finally, when school personnel attend groups, ask questions, and draw connections to work done in the schools, it reinforces for parents the significance of these seemingly mundane, everyday kinds of activities and discussions.

Discussion

Since we have begun working in the schools we have found that teachers are interested in learning more from the project team to further their own education. At one of the schools we have been working with for three years parental involvement was identified as the Deaf Program's highest priority for staff development this coming year. The building administrator marvels to us that this is the first time that topic has made the teachers' "top five" list.

Parents tend not to see themselves as needing assistance until they are overwhelmed. When they are in crisis it is a good opportunity to offer services. Thus we have considered this factor as we begin applying for continued funding of the project. We hope to offer our services to schools using a consultation model. We will work with individual schools to identify which areas they feel they need assistance with (i.e. literacy, locating Deaf role models, parent involvement, or Deaf child development). We will then help them identify Deaf community resources for learning and ways to allocate their in-service

training to meet their learning agendas. We will offer drop-in groups or coffee and chat hours at the schools so that teachers and parents will know we are available to them on specific days. We will also continue to offer the workshops to families with newly identified deaf children.

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